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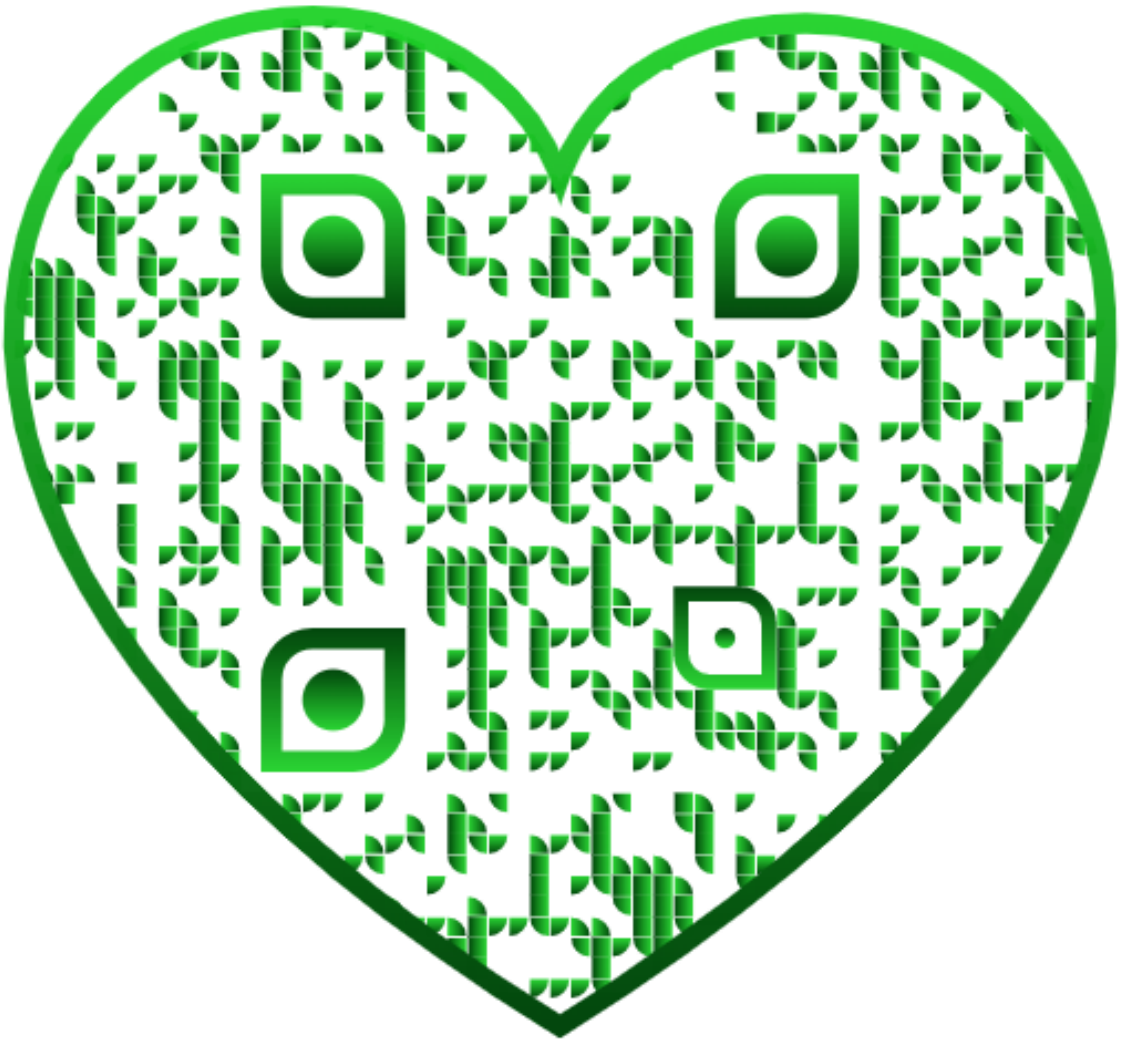

Brahmacharya – For Spiritual Aspirants

Introduction

One of the most important of our practices as monks is the practice of *Akhanda Brahmacharya*. Brahmacharya consists of two mutually-related aspects. On the one hand, there must be conscious sexual continence and on the other hand, sublimating channels must be operationalised.

This practice takes two forms: One is the positive form – that of emphasising the spiritual ideal. Sri Ramakrishna famously said, "Go towards the East; the West will fall behind by itself." When love for God is cultivated, automatically sexual attraction reduces.

However, the present day monastic aspirant comes with a lot of baggage in the form of value-systems, unhealthy habits of emotions & thoughts and impressions, mainly as a result of the immense social changes that have taken place in the span of a couple of decades. So, it is quite often necessary for him to practise the second form, which is essentially the negative form. It is based on the concept of '*Dosha Darshanam*' that Sri Krishna prescribes in the *Gita*. It is necessary to consciously see the evil side of incontinence, of unchastity, drive it home deep into the mind, and build a strong wall, as it were, within him, to protect and preserve one's purity.

Of course, we ought to be aware of the danger of how this, 'seeing the negative side of sexual attraction', itself could become a compulsive habit, a morbid infatuation. So, this habit too is to be cultivated with moderation, and should always be accompanied by the positive form of the practice mentioned above.

In the chapters of this booklet are some techniques, some exhortations, some observations and counsels, basically some patterns of thinking that will help us achieve this grandest of all spiritual ideals. Each of the ideas are culled from great monks of the Ramakrishna Order mainly, and occasionally from monks and spiritual practitioners of other traditions. But care has been taken to ensure that each of the quoted counsels comes from persons who have themselves been ardent practitioners of this great ideal.

Swami Vivekananda & *Brahmacharya*: by Sister Christine.

This subject always stirred him (Swamiji) deeply. Walking up and down the room, getting more and more excited, he would stop before someone, as if there were no one else in the room. 'Don't you see' he would say eagerly, 'there is a reason why chastity is insisted on in all monastic orders? Spiritual giants are produced only where the vows of Chastity is observed. Don't you see there must be a reason? The Roman Catholic Church has produced great saints, St. Francis of Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, St. Theresa, the two Catherines and many others. The Protestant Church has produced no one of spiritual rank equal to them. There ***is*** a connection between great spirituality and chastity. The explanation is that these men and women have through prayer and meditation transmuted the most powerful force in the body into spiritual energy. In India, this is well understood and *yogi*s do it consciously. The force so transmuted is called *Ojas* and is stored up in the brain. It has been lifted from the *Muladhara* to the *Sahasrara*.

In the same eager way he went on to explain that whenever there was any manifestation of power or genius, it was because a little of this power had escaped up the *Sushumna*. And did he say it? Or did we come to see for ourselves the reason why *Avatara*s and even lesser ones could inspire a love so great that it made the fishermen of Galilee leave their nets and follow the young Carpenter, made the princes of the *Shakya* clan give up their robes, their jewels, their princely estates? It was the divine drawing. It was the lure of Divinity.

How touchingly earnest Swamiji was as he proposed this subject! He seemed to plead with us as if to beg us to act upon this teaching as something most precious. ***More, we could not be the disciples he required if we were not established in this***. He demanded a conscious transmutation. 'The man who has no temper has nothing to control,' he said, 'I want a few, 5 or 6, who are in the flower of their youth.'

No written words can convey the vitality, the power, the majesty that came with his spoken words. What might happen to one's ideas, values, personality, if this current of power were let loose upon them! It was great enough to move the world, let alone one little human personality, which was but a straw upon its mighty current. It was force that could sweep everything before it. Old ideas would change; the purpose and aims of life, its values, would change; old tendencies would be directed into a new channel; the entire personality would be transmuted.

What was that which emanated from him, which all felt and none could explain? Was it the *Ojas* he often spoke of? A man with *Ojas* has at his command a power so great that it can move the world. Every word that he utters is charged. One who possesses it may say only a few sentences, but they will be potent until the end of time. Something of this power is lost in the written word, as those know well who were fortunate enough to hear Swamiji speak. The spiritual force generated at such times was so great that some in the audience were lifted above the normal state of consciousness, so that it was possible to remember only the beginning of a lecture. After a certain point, there seemed to be a blank. The normal mind was no longer functioning; a higher state of consciousness beyond reason and memory had taken its place. Long after, perhaps, it would be found that during that period when the mind seemed blank, an especially deep impression had been made.

Swami Vivekananda on Monasticism & Marriage: by Sister Nivedita

To him personally, marriage or any step associated with it would have been the 1st of crimes. To rise beyond the very memory of its impulse, was his ideal, and to guard himself and his disciples against the remotest danger of it, his passion. To his conscience, his monastic vows were incomparably precious.

His dread was not of women, but of temptation. As disciples, co-workers and even as comrades and playfellows, he was associated with women, the world over. It happened almost always that he followed the custom of the Indian villages with these friends of his wanderings and gave them some title of family relationship. In one place he found a group of sisters, elsewhere a mother, a daughter, and so on. Of the nobility of these, and their freedom from false or trivial ideas, he would sometimes boast; for he had in its highest degree that distinction of fine men, to seek for greatness and strength, instead of their opposites, in women.

In the monastic training, he laid constant emphasis on the necessity of being neither man nor woman, because one had risen above both. Anything, even politeness, that emphasised the idea of sex, was horrible to him. The thing that the west called 'Chivalry' appeared to him as an insult to woman.

The ideal of the life of the student, with its mingling of emotional solitude, austerity, and intense concentration of thought is *Brahmacharya*. '*Brahmacharya* should be like a burning fore within the veins!' he said.

The perfect marriage was to his thinking, of the type that he had seen in his Master, in his brother Yogananda and in his disciple Swarupananda. Sri Ramakrishna, it was said, had always referred to marriage as a special, and to the monastic life as a universal service. And this was clearly the determining concept of *Brahmacharya*, in Swamiji's own mind. He called souls to take this vow as if he were calling them to the most honourable warfare. He regarded a monastic Order as 'an army' behind a leader, and the teacher whose followers were all citizens and householders as without an

army. There could be no comparison, in his mind, between the strength of a cause that had, and one that had not, this support.

He says, 'In my opinion, a race must first cultivate a great respect for motherhood, through the sanctification and inviolability of marriage, before it can attain to the ideal of perfect chastity. The Roman Catholics and Hindus, holding marriage sacred and inviolate have produced great chaste men and women of immense power. To the Arab, marriage is a contract, or a forceful possession, to be dissolved at will, and we do not find there the development of the ideal of the virgin, or the *Brahmacharin*.'

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Meditations related to *Dosha Darshanam*:

a. Let us suppose you believe in rebirth or reincarnation. Let us further suppose that in your last birth, your mother outlived you by some years. That is, you died in your last birth in a particular year and after some 5-6 years, she died. Now, you have taken birth here and suppose your mother of your previous birth too has taken birth somewhere around here and she is some years younger to you in this life. There is no chance of her being your mother in this life too, in this case. Now, how do you prove that the particular girl that attracts your fancy now *is not* the same soul that was your mother in your previous birth? We have to accept that there is every chance of that possibility. Imagine then the scandal of our fancies!

b. Look carefully at that girl's face that attracts your fancy. See her smile. Look at her teeth. You know very well that teeth are but an extension of the bone. Now, slowly tear off her facial skin in your mind, and also the facial muscles that lie beneath. You will see her skull in your mind now. Does that look so attractive now? Then, how could you find her face so attractive that you almost lost your control over yourself? Further, take those facial muscles and facial skin that you had ripped apart from her face. Look upon them. Are they attractive now? Then, what exactly was it that was so captivating? The attraction was not ***there.*** It was in your mind. It just got projected onto something out there.

c. Suppose your mind fancies a beautiful young lady. Seek out her mother. Better still; seek out her grand-mother, if possible. Look at them and ask yourself if you would fancy the mother or grandmother in a sexual way. In all probabilities, the aged ladies with wrinkled skins and bent-backs won't appeal to your fancy. Now, just think for a moment. This particular girl, whom you fancy now, will become exactly like these two old ladies in just a couple of years! In fact, most of her life, she will look like them. It is only for a couple of years in her youth that she will look young and appealing. Will you fall for this blatant advertisement gimmick of Mother Nature?

d. Your mind is the lotus on which you have planned to invite your *Ishtam Devata* to come and sit and make himself comfortable. The girl who attracts your fancy is a colourful butterfly that comes fluttering onto your lotus. Such butterflies either have already sat, or will sit, on many other lotuses. They go on like that for some days and then die. But the lotus of your mind will go on forever. Moreover you have already decided that your lotus is earmarked for your *Ishtam Devata* and not to be occupied by anything else. So, shoo away the butterfly and intensify your efforts at bringing you *Ishtam Devata* post haste.

e. Look at your own body. No matter how regularly you clean it, it gets all fouled up. It is essentially a very dirty thing. Extrapolating this sensation, you will clearly be able to see that ***all*** bodies are similar. No doubt, superficially, that girl looks all sweet and attractive. But, remember, the truth of the situation is that she too has a body exactly similar to yours and it leaks everywhere and is dirty. Sri Ramakrishna has very graphically described the process of visualization we should entertain. A girl's body is but a nice, attractive covering for an assortment of blood, pus, mucous and urine! It is unimaginable how you can ever feel attracted to such filth! If, in truth, you are really attracted to such filth, then, you might as well start living in the dustbin of a hospital!

f. It will be very beneficial to visit a hospital sometime. You can see how the nurses and doctors stop their breath when cleaning up the festering sores of patients. Now, those very patients would perhaps have been sexually attractive to you, if you had but seen them in a different situation. So, every attractive person is potentially this putrid smelling mass of flesh and sores! Explain to yourself how you can feel attracted to such persons now!

g. Did that girl attract you? Don't stop at being attracted to her. Go ahead and imagine getting married to her. Imagine strongly that you have got married to her from today itself. Today when you eat at the table, remember that you need one more plate of food for her. Everything that you have had for yourself till today, you will need one more of the same from today onwards for her. Go ahead. Start providing for her too. Do this for one year. Then, start adding yet one more set of everything, for the child that will arrive. And always make an allowance for the great chance that she will turn out to be shrewish. Did you enjoy your leisure, your silence, your readings, and your music? There is a great chance that she doesn't share any such fine tastes and you will have lost your identity. Then, there are always the hordes of her family relatives that will barge in, many times unannounced, and will have to be entertained, at all times of the day, for days on end! The child would have arrived in a year's time. It will be followed by a brood of others in its wake, in all probabilities. Just when you thought you would take a nice sleep, one of them will fall ill and you have to run to the doctor! Or they may meet with an accident, for children are awkward and highly accident-prone. Imagine all the time and energy and money spent for all these! What will happen to your spiritual practices?

h. You really love that girl. Let us further assume that she too is fiercely devoted to you. She will completely be your 'better-half'. She is so spiritually oriented that she also professes to be a collaborator in your spiritual life. Fine. Go ahead. Get married to her. But be warned that then, one fine day, she could start coughing up blood and the tests could reveal that she has developed some fatal disease! Very soon, she will die in your presence. Imagine the consequent pain. And she has left you two or three small infants to care for, to boot. Can you do anything about any of these developments? What would have happened about your 'spiritual practise' in such a scenario? But the world is such, really. Such things happen all too often.

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Holy Sayings

It is beneficial to keep handy a list of admonitions & words of caution made by the great spiritual masters. Keep reading these admonitions often. In time, they will start playing in all your thoughts during your waking hours and safeguard you. Given below are some as starters:

1. **Holy Mother:**
   i. Do not cast your eyes even on a wooden representation of a woman.
   ii. If one lives amidst objects of enjoyment, one is naturally overcome by them.
   iii. A Sadhu must be always alert. His path is very slippery, and a slippery path has to be trod with exceedingly careful steps. Is it a fun to be a monk? He must not even look at a woman, and when he walks the streets, his eyes should be fixed on his big toes. Just as a collar of a dog saves it from being killed as a stray dog, even so does the ochre-robe of a monk save him from harm. His is the royal road and everyone makes way for him.
   iv. I would tearfully pray to God, "O Lord, even in the moon, there are stains. But the moonlight beams are spotless. May my mind be absolutely spotless!"
   v. Whatever you take, offer it to the Lord first and then take it as His *Prasad*. If you do that, your blood will be purified, and if the blood is purified, your mind will be purified.

2. **Swami Vivekananda:**
   i. Those who are not sexually pure can *never* be my disciples.
   ii. Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action.
   iii. It is only the chaste man or woman who can make the *Ojas* rise and store it in the brain. That is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. That is why in all the religious orders in the world which have produced spiritual giants, you will always find absolute chastity insisted upon.
   iv. *Brahmacharya* should be like a burning fire within the veins!
   v. *Brahmacharya* is the corner-stone of all morality and religion...there is no power higher than the power of purity...the glory of life is *Brahmacharya*...save the spiritual store in your body by observing strict *Brahmacharya*...a chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without *Brahmacharya*, there can be no spiritual strength. *Brahmacharya* gives wonderful control over mankind...as a result of *Brahmacharya*, immense faith in yourself will develop in you...
   vi. Sex is the same as attachment. To be free from the idea of sex means purity of heart. Soul has no sex.
   vii. Think of the blessedness of that life from which all carnality has vanished, which can look upon every woman with that love and reverence when every woman's face becomes transfigured and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful One, the Support of this Universe, shines upon it! That is what we want. Do you mean to say that the divine back of a woman can ever be cheated? It never was and never will be. It will always assert itself. Unfailingly it detects fraud, it detects hypocrisy, and unerringly it feels the warmth of truth, the light of spiritual holiness of purity. Such purity is absolutely necessary if real spirituality is to be attained.

3. **Swami Brahmananda:**
   i. You must practice *Brahmacharya*. Otherwise, spiritual instructions will not fructify in your life. You will never understand the actual intended meaning of the scriptures.

4. Swami Turiyananda:

i. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell us, "A man has to be born as many times as he has had sexual union."
ii. Those who are sexually pure take 50 years to root out the sex impulse. While those who have led an indifferent life take several lives to do it!
iii. Isn't it terrible to be overcome by lust in old age? They say that such desires are stronger in old age. The impulse is there, but senses lack power. Isn't it a great torment? Besides, one loses much of one's controlling power then.
iv. Nothing falls from the skies all of a sudden. Why don't all have concentration? Because they do not fulfil the conditions necessary for it, viz, *Akhanda Brahmacharya*. This is known as Strength. What can you expect of one who lacks this Strength?
v. The Master asked me to increase my lust infinitely. I was amazed to hear it! He then explained, "What is lust? It is the desire to get. Then desire to get Him and strengthen this desire greatly."
vi. Mere suppression of passions helps little. There must be a high ideal along with self-restraint. Without a high ideal, the passions will find another outlet. You must give them a new direction, and then you will be automatically rid of them. 'Take refuge in me and control your senses.' As for example, lust. Think that you are His child. Why should you be so low as to be lustful? Or, think that you are ever pure.

5. Swami *Akhanda*nanda:

i. Just see, steadfastness saved Hafez from danger. Lust is a dangerous trap. There is hardly any more formidable hazard than this. Since Hafez had steadfastness, he could break free from that difficult bondage.

6. Swami Yatishwarananda:

i. The test of real aspiration is the monk's longing for purity of heart. The 1st step in this direction is the conservation and sublimation of sexual energy. Let every monk convince himself that total continence at the physical level is possible, and that without it, he can never attain peace of mind, let alone higher spiritual experiences. He should give up the wrong popular notions about sex and solve all problems connected with it intelligently. The main purpose of *Brahmacharya* is the development of *Buddhi* [*Medha*], the intuitive faculty in us for supersensuous perception.

7. Chandogya Upanishad:

i. *Brahmacharya* itself is *Yajna* (8.4.3)
ii. *Brahmacharya* itself is *Ishtam* (8.5.1)

8. Jesus Christ:

i. Know that he who looks upon a woman with an unchaste eye has already committed adultery with her.

9. Desert fathers:

i. Do not trust in your own righteousness, do not worry about the past, but control your tongue and your stomach.
ii. One hour's sleep is enough for a monk who is a good fighter.
iii. Under no circumstance should a monk let his conscience accuse him of anything.

iv. Never see a woman. If you have seen a woman as a woman, you will certainly have fornication, atleast in your mind, or atleast in your dreams. Never see a woman.
v. He who gorges himself and talks with a boy has already in his thoughts committed fornication with him.
vi. You can't be a monk unless you become like a consuming fire.
vii. If you don't think about [chastity & fornication], you have no hope. He who does not fight against the sin and resist it in his spirit will commit it physically.

10. Mahatma Gandhi:

i. To hear a passionate conversation, to see a tempting sight, to taste stimulating dishes, to touch with the hand things which excite passion and yet to intend to check the sex organ is just like trying to save the hand from burning after having thrown it into fire.

11. Ignatius Loyola:

i. They that are carnal cannot do spiritual things; neither can they who are spiritual do carnal things; just as faith is incapable of the deeds of infidelity and infidelity of the deeds of faith.

12. St. Augustine:

i. By continence verily are we bound up and brought back into one, whence we were dissipated into many.

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<u>The Indian vision of womanhood</u>: by Swami Gnaneshwarananda

There was a sage who was reared from early infancy in one of the forest retreats. The only people he had ever seen were the monks who lived in the monastery. He grew up to be a brilliant scholar and his teacher expected that his young disciple would become one of the more prominent of the rishis and perhaps contribute something unique towards the fund of human knowledge and advancement. However the teacher noticed one particular shortcoming in the young man. He was more or less ignorant in the understanding of human nature, because all of his knowledge about the world came from books. He had never had any opportunity of contacting people outside the monastery.

Every morning it was the custom of the monks to send someone from the monastery to the neighbouring village to get a supply of prepared food, sufficient to last them for the whole day. One morning the teacher asked this young man to go to the village for food. It was the 1st time he was going out of the monastery and the young ascetic looked forward to this new experience. He walked out of the forest and entered the village. For the 1st time, in his life, he found men who were very different from those he had known.

He talked to some of them and was very interested in what they had to say. As he had been directed by his teacher, he knocked at the door of the 1st house he saw. The door was opened by a young girl. She stood there with the food, ready to offer it to the monk. But he was so surprised to see, for the 1st time in his life, a person other than a man that he looked with wonder and amazement at her. This seemed to embarrass the young girl, who turned away. The monk asked her to wait. He asked her a few questions – why did she look as she did; why were there so many differences in her features from those of men; and many other questions, which the young girl could not possibly answer. She said, 'Please wait; I shall call my mother. She will answer your questions.'

As soon as she saw the young monk, the mother realised the situation. She understood that it was the 1st time the monk had seen a woman. With the tender care of a mother she explained everything the young monk asked her. She told him that woman was intended to be the mother of the race, and this was the primary and most important mission in her life. For that reason, God created her in such a way that every faculty, every limb of her body, developed towards the fulfilment of that great mission. She pointed out that, if woman looks tender, it is because such tenderness would be necessary for raising the child. If her voice is sweet and soft, it is because she is to contribute those soothing qualities to the future generations. She also emphasised the fact that nature makes such provision that when the child is born it receives a bountiful supply of food, which is stored up in the body of the mother long before the arrival of the baby.

The young monk was deeply impressed with the knowledge, which his books had not taught him.

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Effects of incontinence

It is very helpful to have at hand some reports of the great spiritual masters on the debilitating effects of the loss of chastity on our personality. Similarly, there should be a ready list of the salutary effects of practicing *Brahmacharya*, as reported by eminent persons. Given below are some such reports:

Effects of losing *Veerya*: by Swami Sivananda, Rishikesh

Loss of *Veerya*, particularly in young age, results in the following symptoms – boils on the body, acne or eruptions on the face, blue lines around the eyes, absence of beard, sunken eyes, pale face with anaemia, loss of memory, loss of eye sight, short-sightedness, *Veerya* passing out with urine, enlargement of testis, pain in the testis, debility, drowsiness, laziness, gloominess, heart palpitations, difficulty in breathing, phthisis, back pain, etc.

Body and mind refuse to work energetically. There will be physical and mental lethargy. You will experience much exhaustion and weakness. You will have to drag on a dreary, cheerless existence. Those who have lost much of their *Veerya* become very irritable. Little things upset their minds. They become easy prey to anger, jealousy, laziness and fear. They easily lose the balance of their minds.

One sexual act completely shatters the brain and the nervous system. Sexual energy is the most powerful in the world. When it is wasted, it can never be recouped.

Veerya is the real vitality in a man. It is the hidden treasure of a man. It imparts Brahma Tejas to the face and strength to the intellect.

Doctors from New York: quoted by Swami Trigunatitananda.

Chastity, a pure continent life, is consonant with the best condition of physical, mental and moral health.

Observations on Continence by Dr. Nichols: quoted by Swami Trigunatitananda.

The suspension of the use of generative organ is attended with a notable increase of bodily and mental vigour and spiritual life. It is a medical – a physiological - fact that the best blood in the body goes to form the elements of reproduction in both sexes. *In a pure and orderly life, this matter is absorbed. It goes back into circulation, ready to form the finest brain, nerve and muscular tissue.* This life of man, carried back and diffused through his system, makes him manly, strong, brave, and heroic. If wasted, it leaves him effeminate, weak and irresolute, intellectually and physically debilitated and a prey to sexual irritation, disordered functions, morbid sensation, disordered muscular movement, a wretched nervous system, epilepsy, insanity and premature death.

Man the unknown: by Dr Alexis Carrel.

It is well known that sexual excesses impede intellectual activity. In order to reach its full power, intelligence seems to require both the presence of well-developed sexual glands *and* the temporary repression of the sexual appetite. Freud has rightly emphasized the capital importance of sexual impulses in the activities of consciousness. However his observations refer chiefly to sick people. His conclusions should not be generalised to include normal people, especially those who are endowed with a strong nervous system and a mastery over themselves. *While the weak, the nervous and the unbalanced become more abnormal when their sexual appetites are repressed, the strong are rendered still stronger by practicing such a form of asceticism*...for a young man, up to the time of his marriage, chastity is most salutary, not only in an ethical and aesthetical sense, but also from the hygienic standpoint.

The diseases of the Gods: by M H King & C M Elliot

Establishment of a sane sex order and a stable marriage system in society are the most important sociological needs of the physical and mental health and creativity of individuals. In USA, the epidemic of teenage pregnancy, 'children having children' has become a public health crisis. Single-parent homes abound. It is not that children from single-parent families cannot prosper, but they do worse on average than those from traditional families in every dimension – physically, emotionally, behaviourally, educationally, economically and in terms of smoking and drinking. They die earlier, do less well at school, are less well nourished, suffer more unemployment, and are more prone to deviance and crime and more susceptible to psychiatric illnesses.

Textbook of Medical Physiology: by Guyton & Hall:

It has been shown that the seminal fluid contains secretions from a gland called Prostate situated at the base of the urinary bladder. This prostatic secretion contains phosphates, which, it has been proved, are useful for cerebral functions. Glycerophosphates are often used a brain tonics. Besides, prostrate also produces chemicals called Prostaglandins which have a wide range of anti-inflammatory protective effects on various organs of the body. Synthetic prostaglandins are now-a-days extensively used as anti-inflammatory, anti-arthritic drugs. It seems that the secretion of natural prostaglandins was Mother Nature's method of keeping the body protected against a large number of inflammatory reactions and providing natural resistance....to what extent the loss of the seminal fluid affects the natural prostaglandin-regulatory system and leads to loss of natural phosphates, and whether such a loss is significant for the physical and mental health of an individual is difficult to say.

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The Fall and the Rise

The aetiology of a sexual fall: by Swami Jagadiswarananda

Suppose a young man sees a beautiful young woman in a lonely place. The eyes catch very clearly the image of the beautiful woman. At this stage, there is no knowledge of the woman. The nerves carry the sensation to the brain. Here, if the mind is busy with something else, perception does not occur. If the mind is free, it carries the sensation to the *Jivatman* in the heart centre. The *Jivatman* sends out orders for verification and inquiry. The mind then goes down the spinal cord to the *Muladhara* – our memory bank – to match the sensation with all things seen in the past. When a striking correlation with some past image is found, mind takes both the past memory which is now awakened and the present impression to the heart, when the *Jivatman* i.e. the *Buddhi* or intellect shines forth on them and the person becomes conscious of seeing a beautiful young woman.

Now, all past memories associated with a young woman become alive and rise out of the *Muladhara* and present themselves before the *Buddhi*. The *Buddhi* now orders the various faculties and organs to do certain things so that the new sensation exactly corresponding to the old ones can be had. This is the birth of desire.

If the person is strong, cautious and leaves the spot immediately, he is safe. On the contrary, if he lingers on in the same place, enchanted by the beauty of the young woman, he will succumb to the temptation. A person succumbs only due to his own indiscrimination – *Aviveka*. As soon as he succumbs, the mind runs to the *Svadishthana*. *Kundalini* gets awakened and a miniscule portion of it rushes to the *Svadishthana* lotus and as a result, the sex organ becomes tumescent and you feel a gentle irritation in the whole region. This is another crucial phase in the whole process. At this stage, the person again begins to discriminate and control the sex urge. The will-power may also be exercised. A tug of war ensues between the intellect and will on the one side and the desire, senses and their object on the other. The mind acts as a bus running to and fro between the will, intellect, memory and senses.

Owing to this struggle, indecision and the constant irritation in the sex organs, *Kundalini* gets heated up and subsequently *Veerya* gets secreted from the storage organs, drop by drop, to keep the tender urinary passage from dryness and damage. This secretion of *Veerya* itself causes a mild sexual happiness and hence the desire for grosser sexual enjoyment becomes stronger and stronger in the person.

At any moment during this critical period, the intellect and will could win and the person could control and collect his wits. If he still doesn't do so, he now gets stupidly confused. The whole mind, intellect and body get thrown into utter chaos. The will lies defeated in a corner. At this moment, nothing remains in the mind except one thing – lust and lust alone. It is a moment of great concentration. All happiness is but concentration of the mind. And hence there is a strong undercurrent of happiness too. The man loses all sense of shame, decency, fear of society, personal prestige, and punishment, and will behave like an animal with the woman.

On the other hand, if the man had been pure, chaste all through his life, when the mind dives deep into the *Muladhara* for knowledge of the woman seen, it would have received no bad impression. There will then be no bad reaction. The person will remain undisturbed by the presence of the woman. He will be carefree. His mind will be totally free from lustful desires and consequent anxiety.

The sexual phenomenon in man: from night class by Swami Purushottamananda

It is a terrible fact that the production of *Veerya* initiates the sexual train of thoughts. Seems hard to believe, isn't it? See dogs and cats. The opposite sexes mingle very freely without the least trace of sexuality anywhere in their relationship. Only once a year, *Veerya* is produced in them. Then only does the sexual reaction occur. But not so in man. This is due to 2 reasons:

In man, *Veerya* is produced throughout the year. When produced, there is a greater tendency for the triggering of sexual thoughts. And once a thought is triggered in the mind, imagination takes over. Thus the year-long production of *Veerya* and imagination are the 2 special faculties in man. These 2 together initiate a chain reaction which ends in a catharsis.

In the course of this chain reaction, there is an important part to be played by sensation. The least touch, feel, sensation of the genitals in particular and erogenous zones in general will have a catalytic effect on the reaction. For instance, constipation pressurizes the prostate glands, thus releasing a load of *Veerya* down the ducts. Similarly, itching in the erogenous zones.

Thus a complex, orchestrated symphony of physical changes, mental imaginations and physical sensations explain the sexual phenomenon in man.

How to avoid a fall: The path of Yoga (from a night class by Swami Purushottamananda)

Whenever you get sexually aroused in the presence of a woman, leave the place at once. Else you will fall. Try to change the trend of your thoughts. Talk to *Sadhu*s. Take a brisk walk in open air. Never remain in seclusion. Failure is helped by remaining alone. Do not look at photos of even goddesses. Such photos will lose their sublime value at such times of sexual arousal and only their gross physical value will appeal to the mind. Take a cup of cold water, iced water. Never take any kind of hot drink or beverage. Try doing *Japa*. Bring strong suggestions with each repetition. Pray to God sincerely for help, that He may save you from danger and put you on the right track. Try to bring to memory the immense good of observing *Akhanda Brahmacharya* and the terrible but inevitable consequences of failing in *Brahmacharya*. Try to read elevating passages from good books. Take a cold water bath during arousal. Use wet underwear. Never touch the sex organ during the whole period. It could be catastrophic.

During the period of arousal, sit down. Bring your breath to an even rhythm. Utter 'Om' with every breath. Slowly trace the mind from the tip of the sex organ and push the mid into the *Muladhara*. Then shoot the mind up your spine to the higher centres. Feel that all the past great saints and teachers are assisting you in this process. Feel that with every breath you are inhaling purity, holiness, strength, power, virility and peace into yourself. While exhaling you are giving out all these to the whole world. Chant *Shanti Mantra*s. All these will help you from falling.

A note on *Svapna-dosha* (Wet dreams):

Svapna-dosha is of two kinds; physiological and pathological. In the physiological wet dream, you will be refreshed. It need not alarm you. You should not mind if the discharge of *Veerya* is very occasional. This is also a slight flushing of the apparatus or a periodical cleansing through a slight overflow from the reservoir in which the *Veerya* is stored. The physiological wet dream will not be attended by lustful thoughts. In most cases, the person will not even be aware of the act. It is thus a very natural physiological process.

In the pathological wet dream, the act is attended by sexual thoughts. Depression follows. There is irritability, languishment, laziness, inability to work and concentrate. Frequent wet dreams are of this nature. Physiological wet dreams are very occasional. Frequent pathological wet dreams cause heavy depression, debility, dyspepsia, low spirits, loss of memory, severe back pain, headache, burning in the eyes, drowsiness, and burning sensation at urination or during flow of *Veerya*. *Veerya* becomes very thin.

Wet dreams could be due to various causes like constipation, a loaded stomach, certain kinds of hot food, impure thoughts and a long habit of masturbation.

Outbursts of anger and hatred should be given up. If the mind is kept cool and calm at all times, you will have wonderful health strength and virility. Energy is depleted by fits of anger. The cells and tissues are filled with morbid poisonous materials when one loses his temper and entertains deep hatred. Various sorts of physical ailments crop up. Blood becomes hot and thin. Consequently wet dreams result. Various sorts of nervous diseases are attributable to excessive loss of *Veerya* and frequent explosive outbursts of anger or wrath.

Empty the urine bladder before going to bed. A loaded bladder is an important cause for wet dreams. Similarly severe constipation and loaded bowels too are causes for wet dreams. Never suppress the urge to answer calls of nature. They ruin the nerves.

Wet dreams also occur due to excess of heat in the body, excess of walking or travel, eating large quantities of sweets, chillies or salts. Avoid dainty dishes, sauces, pastries, etc. Do not ride a bicycle.

Svapna-dosha generally occurs in the 4th quarter of the night. Those in the habit of getting up from bed between 3am to 4am and doing *Japa* can never experience wet dreams. Sleep on a rough bed. Sleep only on the back or left side. Breath during sleep should mainly be through the right nostril.

Always have an underwear short pant or *Kaupinam*. This prevents growth of testicles and wet dreams. This also helps avoid inflammation or disease of the testicles. Wet underwear at night is doubly beneficial.

Cold water bath is essential. Never have a hot water bath.

Practice rhythmic and deep breathing all through the day.

Physical exercises are essential.

Root out the love of leisure and ease. Overcome laziness and always keep the body and mind engaged in some useful work. Keep the mind constantly engaged in one of the great secrets of *Brahmacharya*. Lead a disciplined life. Stick to a routine rigorously. Do not brood over the past. That is weakening and will ultimately kill you. Think of the lives of the great *Brahmacharin*s. Gradually a transformation must come.

A note on Personal Hygiene: from the book '*Brahmacharya* is Life' [translated from Marathi]

Kaupinam has to be worn so that the organ does not shake or rub against the thighs. The organ has to be kept very clean. The foreskin could collect a lot of smegma. This has to be cleaned. So also the anus. If they are not kept clean always, you could become unduly aware of the regions because of an itch, perhaps. These regions get heated up very fast. So keep it cool. When lust increases, drink lot of water. Once an hour, wet the place. Body cools down by urinating.

Value of *Veerya*: **by Swami Sivananda, Rishikesh**

Food becomes chyle and the coarse part of food becomes faeces and urine and finer portion becomes blood in five days. Blood becomes flesh in five days. Flesh becomes fat in five days. Fat becomes marrow in five days. Marrow becomes *Veerya* in five days. Thus food becomes refined into *Veerya* in 30 days. One drop of *Veerya* is refined out of 40 drops of blood essentially! The strength and energy one loses in one single sexual act is equal to the energy one spends in 24 hours of deep study or mental work and 72 hours of heavy manual labour!

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On *Brahmacharya* by Swami Yatishwarananda

On Love:

Beware of people who say they love everybody, that they are full of love for everyone. 99% of them do not know others at all, but only their being in love with somebody. They love their attachments, but they do not know what 'love' is. This is one of the worst forms of selfishness and the sense of appropriation. They want to feel they are good; they want to cling to others with their so-called love and to appropriate them; if not their body, then atleast their minds. They have never the strength to do anything, but go on clinging and clinging to others. Their hearts bleed for others, but that only means that their heart likes bleeding, not that they love others. Tall words of love are used by hundreds of people, but all this is not love. Only a Buddha, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda can love. We, on our plane, cannot. It is all emotional greed and one of the worst forms of selfishness and self-consciousness. We do not want to love others, but want to satisfy our emotional craving and thus become emotional blood suckers. That is all. It is all a sham. An unpurified body and mind cannot love. One who has not gone through the necessary bodily and mental disciplines cannot even know what it is to love. All falsehood! All lies! All these people wrapping themselves up in lies. Sentimental dolls! People talk so much about 'heart' and 'love', but what they really mean is body and attachment. They are just trying to cover festering sores with beautiful fragrant flowers.

What is generally called 'love' is more or less of an animal nature, containing physical elements and mostly belonging to the realm of body-consciousness. There must be expansion of heart, expansion of intellect. Love becomes free from animality, as it becomes spiritualised.

Sri Ramakrishna said, "If somebody wants to be an obstacle on my spiritual path, am I to listen to him? No! I should rather tear such a person to pieces!" Christ said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is on heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

Tremendous will power, tremendous energy, tremendous and unflinching steadiness are necessary if you want to attain anything on the spiritual path. Unsteady and wavering people who are not prepared to purify their minds, who do not want to be one-pointed, cannot take to spiritual life in right earnest and have no place in spiritual life.

We do not want worms grovelling in the dust, but men, real men, men expressing and living their eternal, innate divinity and purity. What we generally call 'men' are not men but helpless slaves to their senses, cravings and impulses. They do not deserve being called 'men'.

Don't be like weather-cocks. Don't begin to dance and cry. We want neither. Control all the outer expressions, Never become playthings in the hands of any and every stimulus and any outer event. You can be kind without being attached.

Always act in such a way that others don't have to take advantage of you, don't dare to become familiar with you. Act in such a way that people who are worldly-minded, and of a different temperament won't be able to bear your presence, and would always avoid you.

Your behaviour must always be dignified, keeping people at a distance, without being unkind. Nobody must be allowed to take advantage of you. You must radiate such dignity and purity that worldly people won't dare to have worldly talks in your presence.

Only by getting rid of our physical consciousness, even in its most subtle forms, can we attain to the highest goal. Be always on your guard; watch the movements of your mind. The moment a tendency sets in to go to the lower centres, draw the mind away by force and fix it in one of the higher centres.

Perfect *Brahmacharya*:

In a perfect *Brahmacharin*, the *Buddhi* becomes very sharp, memory sharp and will power adamantine. He becomes a person of sterling character. Every thought, every word and every act of that person will tell like thunderbolt. These are the real reformers, the real world-movers. Such persons will be revered everywhere. A great power ever moves behind them. A perfect *Brahmacharin* attains longevity of life; he succeeds easily in learning and in all walks of life. Wherever there is greatness, extraordinary display of *Buddhi*, be sure, it is due to the work of *Ojas* and such a person has succeeded to a great extent in observing *Brahmacharya*.

Before attaining *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, *Brahmacharya* must be observed by degrees. Firstly, abstaining oneself from physical sexuality. Second comes the conquest of gross sexual desires. Thirdly, freedom from subtle sexual desires, instincts, ideas, suggestions and imprints. Lastly, perfect *Brahmacharya*. Before attaining perfect *Brahmacharya*, i.e. *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, one has to fail often. The path is too long, too uphill, too winding, too dark and too slippery. None knows when, where and how one could fail. None can predict from which direction the fall awaits the aspirant. But a truly heroic aspirant can never retreat, can never yield to temptations, can never become careless.

Practice of *Brahmacharya*:

1. **Need:** *Brahmacharya* develops the brain and enables it to grasp supersensuous realities. There can be no real meditation, no higher realisation, no awakening of the higher centres without unbroken *Brahmacharya*. A socially accepted form of moral life is not enough for a spiritual aspirant. He must totally control his sex instinct.

2. **Ground Rules:**
   i. No frontal attack on the senses. First raise the mind and create a higher mood with the effort of the will; then with a little force, everything is accomplished. If you don't do this, violent reactions ensue.
   ii. Avoid exciting food, oversleeping, over-exercise, laziness, bad company and evil conversations.
   iii. The basic creative urge must be sublimated and diverted to higher channels. If you cannot transmute all your energies to meditation, prayer and worship, then engage in some creative work. Have regular studies and deep thinking too. Always keep the higher centres active.
   iv. Regulated breathing keeps the mind calm and makes the mind alert too.
   v. Keep the body and clothes clean and pure. Physical cleanliness must be associated with mental cleanliness.
   vi. Holy company has profound influence on aspirants. But he must totally and unconditionally renounce company of bad elements.

3. **Techniques and broad outlines:**
   i. Some connection exists between sex and the imaginative faculty in man. Subtle shades of sex get mingled with our ordinary thinking. This problem of imagination has to be tackled in a systematic way.
   ii. By constantly thinking good thoughts, the complete bad thought structure can be changed. Never allow mind to form wrong pictures and brood over them. This is possible by producing counter-thoughts. Think of the divine or holy personality intensely, filling your mind completely with the thought.

iii. Creating a strong dislike or disgust for the object of temptation is a stepping stone to the sublimation of feelings and desires.
iv. All these must be done in a conscious, deliberate and systematic way. By *Japa*, *Dhyana*, repeating elevating passages, prayer, a strong counter-current of spiritual thoughts must be raised.
v. As soon as trouble arises, if higher mood cannot be created, consciously, deliberately beat the place and raise your mood. Always keep a good stock of holy imaginations and ideas. Those who love God intensely are not easily affected by sex.
vi. Hideous images and temptations can take place only in the dark regions of the unconscious mind. Direct the searchlight of the Self into these regions; they will vanish at once.
vii. Whole trouble is – our images have acquired reality. Forgetting that they are just images, we allow them to become real and haunt us. Learn to deflate them and deprive them of life. Then bring another good image to counteract the bad one. Any person that attracts you is just an image. You give him or her reality.
viii. Be ever conscious of your higher centres. Any kind of strong temptation is preceded by a fall in consciousness. If you feel your mind going down, cajole him 'Come up. Why stay down? You should know better than to run after sex and attachment!' treat him as a friend. He is your companion and collaborator in spiritual life.
ix. Visualize the reality of human body – go beyond the skin. See the skeleton, bones, flesh, dirt.
x. Look upon yourself in a different and truer way.
xi. Try to be with your *Ishtam* the very moment any trouble arises and then you are safe. Learn to connect all your thoughts to your *Ishtam*.
xii. When struggling with the senses, attractions or mental pictures, you should have a large armoury. *Japa*, *Dhyana*, repeating holy passages, prayer, intense and one-pointed visualisation of a holy personality, rhythmic breathing, holy company, counter-thoughts, etc.

4. Change of consciousness:

i. Until you experience spiritual awakening, *Brahmacharya* in thought, word and deed is difficult.
ii. The *Anahata Padma* has to bloom.
iii. Experience the bliss of superconscious light.
iv. Craving for pleasure is at the root of the sex problem. This can be cured only if the bliss of the heart-lotus is tasted.

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***Brahmacharya* – personal experiences: by Pt Gopikrishna**

There was an extraordinary change in my nervous equipment and a new type of force was now racing through my system connected unmistakably with the sexual parts, which also seemed to have developed a new kind of activity not perceptible before. The nerves lining the parts and the surrounding regions were all in a state of intense ferment, as if forced by an invisible mechanism to produce *Veerya* in abnormal abundance to be sucked up by the network of nerves at the base of the spine for transmission into the brain through the spinal cord. The sublimated seed formed an integral part of the radiant energy which was causing me such bewilderment. I could readily perceive the transmutation of *Veerya* into radiation and the unusual activity of the reproductive organs for supplying the raw material for transformation in the mysterious laboratory – *Muladhara Chakra* – into that extremely subtle and ordinarily imperceptible stuff we call nervous energy, on which the entire mechanism of the body depends, with the difference that the energy now generated possessed luminosity and was of a quality allowing detection of its rapid passage through the nerves and tissues, not only by its radiance, but also by the sensations it caused with its movements.

The awakening of *Kundalini* implied the introduction into the human body of a higher form of nerve force by the constant sublimation of the human seed, leading ultimately to the radiant transcendental consciousness aglow ever after in the transformed brain of the successful initiate.

By some mysterious process, the precious secretion of the seminal glands was drawn up into the spinal tube and through the interlinking nerves transferred into a subtle essence, then distributed to the brain and the vital organs, darting across the nerve filaments and the spinal cord to reach them. The suction was applied with such vigour as to be clearly apparent, and sometimes in the early stages with such violence as to cause actual pain to the delicate parts.

Controlled by an invisible mechanism, it seemed, a hidden organ had begun to function all of a sudden in the hitherto innocent-looking region, converting the reproductive fluid into a radiant vital essence of high potency which, racing along the nerve fibres and spinal canal, nourished the brain and the organs with a rejuvenating substance out of reach in any other way. The activity in the reproductive region was not the only new development that had occurred. A corresponding change in the brain and other nerve centres had also taken place which regulated the consumption and output of the new mechanism.

There is a high powered conscious centre situated in the human brain at a place near the crown of the head, built of exceptionally sensitive brain tissue. The location of the centre allows it to command all parts of the brain and the entire nervous system with a direct connection with the reproductive organs through the spinal canal. In the common man, the budding centre (we call it hence because it is not yet fully bloomed) draws its nourishment from the concentrated nerve food present in the *Veerya* in such extremely limited measure so as not to interfere with the normal reproductive function of the parts. When completely built, the centre is designed to function in place of the existing conscious centre, using for its activity a more powerful vital seed extracted from body tissues by nerve fibres, in extremely minute quantities, collected and rushed into the brain through the spine. This *Veerya* is the most powerful restorative and food available in the body to protect and save life.

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On *Brahmacharya* by Swami Purushottamananda

***Brahmacharya* & *Sadhana*: A night class talk**

Antahkarana means inner organ or inner instrument. Actually, *Antahkarana* is a single unit. But *yogi*s have analysed it and based on its functions have divided it into four parts. At certain times, this *Antahkarana* is found to be cogitating – 'is it this or is it that?' Then it is called *Manas*. At other times, it is very definite – 'this is it; this shall be done.' Then it is called *Buddhi*. Sometimes it manifests 'me and mine'. It is then *Ahamkara*. Vedanta recognises three parts. *Yogi*s add one more part – *Chitta*. This is the *Antahkarana* in waves, *Kalpana loka* - The world of imagination.

Antahkarana rules the body. *Antahkarana* moves. So body moves. It goes to this boy's room. Then it goes to another's room. If the *Antahkarana* say 'go', the legs move. The *yogi*s therefore always keep a track of where the *Antahkarana* is going. It has to be trained to go along particular paths only. It should not go to certain areas. At certain times, only certain regions must be visited. There are certain places it should never go to. This is *Sadhana*.

Antahkarana can flow like a river. Along two directions, upwards and downwards. These directions are with respect to a man in waking state. In waking state, a man is erect. While sleeping, backbone is supine. Even when awake, backbones of animals are supine. Along the spine are the *Sahasrara* at the top and *Muladhara* at the bottom. Body is basically in two halves – the upper half is the head & thorax; the lower half is the abdomen & sacrum. Legs and hands are but appendages. *Antahkarana* could move in either of these two regions.

When the *Antahkarana* is at the *Manipura* centre, you feel tremendously hungry. You want to eat a hell lot. Swami Yatishwarananda ji used to say 'Monks tie up the nether tongue very securely, but let loose the upper tongue. Ravenous eating is just another form of sex.' *Yogi*s say that the tongue and the sex organ have the same *tattva*. At *Manipura*, mind finds joy in eating.

When the *Antahkarana* is at the *Muladhara*, it finds a joy in evacuation. When at the *Svadishthana*, it finds joy in reproduction. '*Vimuktiriti payau; prajaatiramruta ananda ityupasthe*'. Sexual sense is heightened when *Antahkarana* is at this centre. That is why that book '*Brahmacharya* is Life' prescribes that a *Brahmacharin* should not even look at his sex organ. If you do so, the organ gets aroused and erect and then things could get out of hand and you could end up committing blunders.

Veerya is produced when *Antahkarana* is at the sex centre. At the prostates, this *Veerya* is manufactured. The produced *Veerya* flows down into the testicles if mind lingers on at this centre. Once this occurs, the trouble starts. *Veerya* collected in the testicles is what is called 'heat'. It won't leave you in peace. It will drive you crazy. It wants to flow out. So we see that when the *Antahkarana* moves downwards, *Veerya* will flow out.

When *Antahkarana* moves at *Anahata* and above, every *dhatu* – blood, *Veerya*, etc too move upwards. Chest becomes reddish. This *Urdhvamukhitva* of *Antahkarana* is only by relentless *Japa*, *Dhyana*, *Bhajan*, *Karma Yoga*, *Swadhyaya*, etc.

Veerya is actually packed up energy, powerful beyond description. Every man can produce 100 to 150 kids. But that does not happen because man wastes his *Veerya* on only one woman. Monks don't waste *Veerya* in the sexual act at all. I want to know what you are doing with that colossal amount of energy and motive power!

Antahkarana is not moving upwards. Hence I don't find the glow of *Urdhvaretas* among you all. Without *Japa*, no *Brahmacharya*.

The secret of *Brahmacharya*: A night class talk

There are many who superficially profess to be *Brahmacharin*s. But inside they are perfect hypocrites and pure charlatans. Compared to such terrible rogues, I like people who wholeheartedly accept a householder's life and live as a rank materialist.

The secret is never to allow *Veerya* to be produced in our body. *Veerya* is manufactured from the richest portion of our body. Once manufactured in the prostates, it has to enter the testis and then come out of the body. It cannot stay inside the body, nor can it be absorbed back into the blood at present. Once *Veerya* gets collected in the testis, it initiates great physiological changes in the body. It will then be lost either voluntarily or in dream.

All problems start when *Veerya* comes to the testis. So, it should not be allowed to come and stay there. If *Veerya* comes out, you are in peace. But this peace is of no use. Not a single drop should come out. It should be sublimated. Practise all this for 12 years and see the wonderful result for yourself. For 12 years, the organ should become tumescent. Even in dream! *Japa, Dhyana, Seva* should go on forever.

The central idea of *Brahmacharya* is to make all your blood and energies move or flow upwards, so that blood and energy to the prostate glands is cut off. That will have to in turn open up the heart and higher centres. Such a man is called *Urdhvaretas*. If you ever grow bored, i.e. grow slack to your spiritual ideal, immediately the major portion of your *Prana* will go to the prostates to manufacture *Veerya*.

Do you notice that the sex-urge and consciousness is ever awake in us? It is this very energy that is the sole crux of man. At the lower centres, this energy can produce a dozen bodies like yours. If this energy is carefully, methodically manipulated and sublimated to the higher centres, i.e. higher levels of personality, you become ever wide awake on higher planes and slowly and gradually tend towards spirituality. At these higher centres, this energy can produce a dozen minds like yours. Instead of being a physical father, you will be a spiritual guru.

Now, the main question is how to send this energy upwards? You have to make a Bheeshma *Pratijna*. Say 'No' to the sex-urge once and for all. No choice of a second consideration. Once it finds no way out at the lower centres, then, by will power again, it has to be channelized to higher centres. This is by wanting God, your soul, the self-conscious entity in you, very badly. This want will draw the great energy upwards.

It is very important that the mentality regarding the way we look at 'sex' has to change. Look upon the sexual organ with respect. Have no disgust for it. Nor have any guilt. The sexual act is a very noble act, meant for reproduction. There is absolutely no need to attach any fantastic feelings to it. See how the *rishi*s refer to this in *Mundaka Upanishad*:II.i.5

A *yogi*'s attention is always on his *Muladhara*. At any cost, ensure that the centre is not activated. This can be done only by continuously, unceasingly keeping the higher centres alive by means of *Japa, Dhyana, Seva*, studies, and other spiritual practices.

Make a clear study of your mind; the ways by which it cheats you. Mind is very subtle and exceedingly quick. In no time, it would have established a sexual association (although in the subconscious levels) for a particular perception and instantly activate the lower centres. To control it, you have to be exceedingly methodical. First of all, start by

completely controlling your body and senses. Everyday give Brother Ass the bare minimum. Absolutely no luxury. If you indulge him even once, he will drag you every which way and finally lead you to the lower centres.

All our actions, *Bhajan, Japa, Dhyana*, studies, etc should never get us bored. If we are getting bored, it means energy is going to the sexual centre. If you do not add your feeling (*Bhava*), monotony will enter and that will kill you.

***Brahmacharya* & Nation-building: A public lecture in Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore**

In this world, almost everybody, excepting a few fortunate and pure souls, is badly suffering from *Kama-roga*, the disease of lust. But most of them don't even know that this is a disease! Hence the apathy. No one is making an effort to find a cure for the disease. This is a disease which eats into the vitals of a person, a disease which completely destroys one's personality. People infected by this disease are indeed zombies – the living dead.

Without trying to control this epidemic, what avails it if we try to reform our society? Nation-building is a very pure job. Can impure minds ever accomplish it?

Hatred and jealousies that are rampant in the society and in the Nation, are but virulent symptoms of this disease. Anger and vengeance that are rampant in the society and in the Nation are but manifestations of the same thing – lust. Every form of excess and corruption in the society and in the Nation are but manifestations of the same thing – lust.

Lust can never be fulfilled. People generraly understand lust to mean sexual pleasure. Hence it is that people think *Brahmacharya* means sexual abstinence.

Lust – *kama* – means 'want', 'desire'. But our main emphasis here is indeed on sexual control. Because, building a personality which is filled with *Medha Shakti* and moral force indispensably requires *Veerya Shakti*.

Practising *Brahmacharya* while mixing with women is an impossible task, because lust is blind; lust has no scruples. While you mix with women, your mind will invariably experience *kama vikara*, ever so little though it be.

What indeed can we expect out of the common run of people? All they are ever capable of is petty talk and petty quarrels. Therefore they are very aptly called 'Petty people'. However, out of these very petty people, if we have to produce great achievers, we shall have to make them practise *Brahmacharya*.

Can we expect a chicken-hearted man to ever practice *Brahmacharya*?

Swamiji says 'Hanuman is a perfect *Brahmacharin*.' A true *Brahmacharin* can do the work of 25 persons single-handedly. Seen from this point of view, most of the avowed *Brahmacharin*s in this country today are just 'unmarried youths' and not really chaste *Brahmacharin*s.

Many people embark on leading a continent life for the first time in their soul's evolution. Hence you don't find the grandeur of *Brahmacharya* in them.

One who is endowed with the *Shat-sampatti* alone is a true *Brahmacharin*.

People think that sex pleasure is the highest enjoyable by man. But what do they know of the intense bliss of *Brahmacharya*! A *Brahmacharin*, who does not experience even

the least *mano-vikara, kama-vikara,* even if he has not realised God, he will be filled with bliss – his pure body, pure mind will be floating in a stream of intense bliss, as it were.

A person who has firmly decided to renounce every kind of sense pleasure is very near to God. He will very quickly receive Divine Grace. Then, he will enjoy a very intense bliss in every pore of his body. So intense will that bliss be that he will, as it were, melt in it! A true *Brahmacharin* alone is a true lover of his country, because he will have no selfish mentality.

Popular arguments about *Brahmacharya*: from night class talks

1. The moment we talk of *Brahmacharya*, people quote Vishwamitra's failures as an example. But they forget the sequel of how he became a *Brahmarishi* later by dint of great *sadhana*.
2. Looking at Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji, if everybody renounces family life, how will creation go on? How will the world go on?
    i. But from the very beginning of creation, i.e. from the time of the *Veda*s, there have always been continent householders and monks. The *shastra*s enjoin '*yadahareva virajet, tadahareva pravrajet*'.
    ii. How can everyone renounce family life? Michael Angelo was such a great painter. Mozart was such a great musician and composer. Dr Devi Shetty is such a great doctor. Does this mean everyone will become a painter or a musician or composer or a doctor? That won't happen. There will always be individual liking. If anyone wants to be a painter, he can take inspiration from Michael Angelo. If anyone wants to be a musician or composer, Mozart will inspire them. Similarly, if some rare person wants to renounce everything and become a monk, Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji will inspire him or her.
    iii. I am very happy to see you all so conscientious about God's creation! Good work. Keep it going! But allow us to renounce. And if some rare person wants to renounce, please allow him or her to also pursue his or her own 'distorted' fancy!
    iv. It is impossible for everyone to be continent. World-bewitching *Maya* isn't sleeping!
3. Every person has certain debts – debts to the ancestors, debts to the gods, etc. to repay this debt to our ancestors, one must beget children. Else he has no *Mukti*.
    i. In the *Bhagavatam*, Rishabadeva's son Karabhajana says, 'One who lets go every job, duty, responsibility for the sake of realization of God, such a man is free of every form of debt.'
    ii. If you will really get married and beget your children purely for the sake of repaying your debts to your ancestors, then Godspeed to you. But, don't be a hypocrite. Don't pull the ideal down.
4. *Brahmacharya* causes various ailments in the person!
    i. What shall we say about all those 'happily married men' who suffer from ever conceivable type of disease!

Notes on *Brahmacharya* from night classes:

What is *Brahmacharya*?

Aiming to control lust is the negative aspect of *Brahmacharya*. Aiming to realise God is the positive aspect of *Brahmacharya*. *Brahmacharya* should imply both the negative aspect of sex control ***and*** the positive aspect of love of God simultaneously in our mind. If, this positive aspect is missing, our obsession with *Brahmacharya* might be just another form of our obsession with sexual indulgence. If *Brahmacharya* means sex control and love of God, only then is it an ideal and meaningful and can lead us to progress. If it means only sex control, *Brahmacharya* itself will be the bane of our spiritual life! If you are merely continent,

without an aspiration for God-realization, you are not a *Brahmacharin*; you are but a castrated bull!

Brahmacharya is not talk or reading. It is Practice! *Brahmacharya* is the only key to open the *Sushumna* and awaken the *Kundalini*.

Brahmacharya means staying in the *Brahma Bhava*. Seeing the sky, you get a feeling of vastness, eternity. When Sri Ramakrishna went to touch Holy Mother's body, he entered *Samadhi*! Not lower purity, but higher purity is required for spiritual life. Do continual *Japa*. If you feel you have conquered lust, gone; you are undone. Kill lustful thoughts as soon as they rise. A wave is very small in the centre of the ocean. It then gathers speed, size, volume and hits the shore with great force and dies down. '*Tarangayite ime api samudrayante*' as *Rishi* Narada says.

What is meant by *Akhanda Brahmacharya*? It means being a *Brahmacharin* in thought, word and deed. Let alone the word and deed. The catch is 'at the thought level'. Even a single thought that has even faint sexual overtones is not to be entertained in the mind. Remember how Sri Ramakrishna's mind reacted violently when he allowed his hand to touch his wife's body. Meditate on this.

When one is hungry, the worst sort of food tastes very nice and becomes very dainty to the palate. No pillow and mattress are required when one is dead tired. Observing *Brahmacharya* means sexual fasting. Sex instincts and desires remain very keen and powerful. As such, even the ugliest and aged person of the opposite sex is sure to ignite strong sexual passions. What to speak of young people of the opposite sex!

In fine, *Brahmacharya* means:

- To know the stored up power of the mind, to know the workings of the *Kundalini* and to get access to this power.
- To know the art of waking up the *Kundalini* and to have perfect control over it.
- To know how to protect oneself from all pitfalls which occur due to the uncontrolled behaviour of *Kundalini*.
- To know the secret of the *Kundalini* working on the mind as the 3 *guna*s and to guide its *Shakti* to the proper place of working.
- To know the secret of desires and thought functions.
- Absolute and inviolable control over all facets of ourselves – body, mind and *prana*.
- To know the secret of food, drink, bath and weather and their repercussions on the *Kundalini*.
- To stop the very manufacturing of *Veerya* and channelize all that energy into awakening the divinity within us.

Defining some terms related to *Brahmacharya*:

***Veerya* & *Veerya Shakti*:**

What is *Veerya Shakti*? Imagine like this – give 100 women to one man. By sexual intercourse with these 100 women, this single man can produce people enough to fill a whole village! Can you imagine this? This is the power of *Veerya*. Every man has enough power within him to populate a whole town! What is happening to that power now? It is not being expressed to its full potentiality. So it is dammed up. To recognise this great power in man, to discern its potentiality, to control it totally and to redirect it to higher directions like spiritual unfoldment is *Brahmacharya*. Continence alone is not *Brahmacharya*. But without continence, there is no *Brahmacharya*. *Brahmacharya* should be only for God realization.

Shukra or *Veerya* means *Brahman*. *Shukra* is white. *Brahman* is luminous. This suggests that *Brahmacharya* is meaningful only if it is for God realisation.

Veerya is the seventh *dhatu*, the very essence of essences. Every *dhatu* has 3 divisions, each nourishing the physical body, the heart and the intellect. Only that person who fully uses the body, heart and intellect can preserve perfect *Brahmacharya*. A wrestler who uses his physical body only but keeps the intellect and heart under-nourished cannot expect to have full *Brahmacharya*. The *Veerya* that belongs to the body will be absorbed back. But the *Veerya* that belongs to the heart and the intellect will certainly flow out. If a person does *Japa* and *Dhyana* but caters not to his heart and neglects exercises can have mental *Brahmacharya* alone. The *Veerya* belonging to his body and heart will surely flow out. But an advanced *yogi* can have full *Brahmacharya* only by his deep *Dhyana*, even without exercises.

Veerya exists in a subtle form throughout the whole body. It is found in a subtle state in all the cells of the body. It is withdrawn and formed into a gross form in the sexual organ under the influence of the sexual will and sexual excitement. Swami Yatishwaranandaji used to say, 'The blood of an incontinent person – is it blood? It is just a blood-like liquid. Red water! True blood will have the nourishing elements of *Veerya* in it.'

Urdhvaretas:

An *Urdhvaretas Yogi* not only converts the *Veerya* into *Ojas*, but checks, by his yogic powers, through purity in thought, word and deed, the very formation of *Veerya* by the secreting cells of the testis. This is a great secret. It is not that *Veerya* is continuously produced and re-absorbed into the blood. No. The very formation is prevented. A man might not have lost a single drop of *Veerya* for 12 continuous years and yet might not be an *Urdhvaretas*! Now, imagine what else is required for meaningful *Brahmacharya*!! Our vows need to be reiterated often. Reiteration of vows is the way we purify our vows, what is called *Sankalpa Shuddhi*. Bheeshma could maintain lifelong *Brahmacharya* only because his conviction was very pure.

Why is *Brahmacharya* needed?

The best period of one's life is between 10 and 30 years. Whatever habit is formed in this period will continue to the very end of one's life. And it is during this crucial period that the vast majority of boys and girls get ruined. Imprint of bad habits on a young brain turns out to be very, very difficult to eradicate. In a youth, senses remain wide awake; desire for sense pleasure is very keen and totally blind too. Hence one must be very careful in youth and pay special attention towards character building.

Holy Mother said that it is a great *tapasya* if you just stay in the Order. Physical presence alone is not meant. 'Stay' means have full control of your own *Brahmacharya* and then tolerate every kind of barb from every Tom, Dick & Harry who will care to rub shoulders against you. Just do this much. You will see how strong your mind becomes.

A *Brahmacharin* will have wonderful thought power. He can move the world. With *Akhanda Brahmacharya*, you will develop *Vichara Shakti* and *Dharana Shakti*. If you persistently refuse to yield to your lower nature, *Veerya* gets deflected upwards and becomes *Ojas*. This intensifies the *Buddhi* to a remarkable degree. *Buddhi* becomes sharp and clear by *Brahmacharya*. A *Brahmacharin* can turn out immense mental, physical and intellectual work. He has a magnetic aura around his face. He possesses tremendous energy, a clear brain, gigantic will power, bold understanding and retentive memory.

Brahmacharya and *Buddhi Shakti* are closely related. *Buddhi Shakti* and concentration are closely related. Concentration and learning are closely related. Hence

learning depends on *Brahmacharya*. The anterior part of the brain is the repository of *Medha Shakti*. *Veerya Shakti* is the food, the nourishment of this *Medha Shakti*. When *Veerya Shakti* is wasted elsewhere, *Medha Shakti*, by which we grasp subtle things, gets stunted.

A true *Brahmacharin*'s mind would have thinned out; that means, it would have become luminous, transparent. A *Brahmacharin* who has practised *Akhanda Brahmacharya* for full 12 years will attain to *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* the moment he hears the *Mahavakya*. *Brahmacharya* should be accompanied with *Japa*. Else, it cannot be maintained. Without *Brahmacharya*, mind will not gain power to meditate. Without *Brahmacharya*, it is not possible to hold fast to great ideals. There will be no firmness, steadiness or loyalty. When you solve your sexual conflict at the mental level, you will start looking fresh and healthy. Sexual conflict saps a hell lot of energy and the strain shows itself unmistakeably on your face.

It is sufficient if you hold steadfast to just one ideal, the ideal of *Brahmacharya.* If you are true to the vow of *Brahmacharya*, everything else will fall in line and you will succeed.

First of all, you should have *Veerya Dharana*. Then comes *Tattva Dharana*. God and *tattva* are not far away. With *Veerya Dharana* comes alertness, wakefulness.

Only a mind that is free from lust is capable of understanding the central point, the theme, the main issue.

I go to the extent of saying – there is no need of practicing any of the four *Yoga*s even. It is sufficient if you can be 100% true to your vows of *Brahmacharya*. Not one single unnecessary thought should arise in your mind. Just ensure this much.

Lust (*kama*) has to be sublimated in the fire of youth itself. If, by the force of your youth, you just suppress your lust, it might lie low for some time. But by 60 or 70, when body gets weak, it will express itself! As long as *Kundalini* remains in *Muladhara*, the great hankering and attachment for food, sleep and sex remain active in a person. Life will be primarily centred on these 3 activities. As long as *Kundalini* continues to reside there, even if you try sincerely to observe *Brahmacharya*, you will fail in some way. You will never be able to enjoy the real bliss and real concentration of the mind.

What attitudinal changes do we need for practising *Brahmacharya*?

Swami Yatishwaranandaji used to say: All objections against *Brahmacharya* are nonsense. It is simply ludicrous to say that continence causes dangerous diseases. There is something seriously wrong in a civilization which says such things. People raise objections against *Brahmacharya* not out of conviction but for self-justification. Today women have to struggle to find their husbands themselves; this is bound to lower the conception of chastity and the feeling for a pure life, because they try to attract men by their physical charms and to conquer them by their beauty. In such a civilization, you cannot find a very high conception of chastity, and as a consequence, very little of real spirituality in a higher sense.

All women are either your mother or sister or your child. You might fail 100 times in developing this definite attitude and might entertain lustful thoughts. But despair not. Try just once more.

Mother Nature has implanted sexual attraction in us only for the sake of reproduction. Now, as a monk, you have very clearly decided, and even announced to the entire world, that you will not produce another human being into this world. If this is clear to you, then how do

you justify the sexual attraction that you feel for the girl now? So, the attraction need not arise at all. Today mankind has wrongly assumed that human beings have a natural 'sexual instinct'. No. The natural instinct is a procreative one. If men and women restrict sexual indulgence to mere procreation, then that itself is *Brahmacharya*. As that is quite impossible for the vast majority of people, total abstinence is prescribed.

Try to know about your sexuality as clearly, scientifically, as possible. The need of the hour is to dispel all glamour and fantasy regarding sex. That is the way out of it. Sex urge is a hunger, a physical need, just as your stomach growls or eyes feel drowsy, and it is an even more basic and stronger physical need.

Every mischief and desire is but a manifestation of 'sex', even your so-called 'chest-up, head-held-high, lordly bearing'. If you get angry, know that it is your sexuality projecting along a different route. So avoid getting angry. For it increases lust. So also *Ahamkara*. One how has a big fat ego is sure to have intense lust.

Observe clearly how a wave of sexual thought awakens and gathers strength in you: in the beginning, it is all seemingly fine. No lapses, apparently. In the nascent stages, it is quite pleasurable too, not unlike a cat purring around your ankle; doesn't seem to contain any harmful intent, whatsoever. So, you allow the thought some room, some freedom, and then, in a jiffy, it assumes monstrous proportions; legions of thoughts rise in its support and sweep you off your feet. You have to chop off the cat at its first purr!

If you are interested in *Yoga*, absolute conservation of *Veerya Shakti* is a primary must, is a sine-qua-non. Because, if *Veerya Shakti* is lost, it creates a hell lot of imbalance in the body, nerves and mind. Despite of so much *sadhana*, why don't I see the glow of *Brahmacharya* on your faces? It is because you are concentrating on ***controlling*** your passions, while you should have concentrated on ***sublimating*** them. Re-channelize them. Mind wants to flow down. You should let it flow up.

When there are itches on the body, scratching gives relief and pleasure. Sex impulse is also but a nervous itching.

The external woman is merely a suggestion to the element of lust in your own mind. Lust is in the mind. Hence, lust is called *Manasija* or mind-born. The god of lust is called *Manmatha*. If lust overpowers the mind, even a devotee will be seen as 'woman'. If lust is removed from the mind, woman becomes a devotee, that is all. The whole problem is with one's own *kama, krodha*, etc.

When a man mates with a woman, we call it vulgar. But when the baby is born, we cuddle it and shower all love and affection on it. What an irony! Slowly get rid of such incongruence in your attitudes. Get rid of all fantasies about sex. Come out of your blinds, and learn everything about sex, as clearly as possible, as objectively, scientifically and systematically as possible. Sex can never trouble you if you know about it. Know about the various perversions that manifest in people. There is another curious fact about sex. Sexual attraction need not always be between opposite sexes. It could well be between those of the same sex as in homosexuals. The reason is – lust is in us. Lust is neither in body, nor in the object out there. It is in the mind. Its expressions take various forms. For some, this lust is towards the opposite sex. For some it is towards the same sex. A monk must learn self-defence from inside. His enemy is *Manmatha* – in the mind. He must learn to defend himself from this terrible internal enemy. If he can't protect himself, how can he protect others? A person who has truly practised *Brahmacharya* is like a heated match-stick. Every one of his senses would have become so very sharp. And needless to say, every sense object is in itself

an oven. The two should never come close to each other. They are, as it is, individually highly inflammable; and mutual contact is catastrophic.

Keep on instructing your own mind, 'Look here, this kind of behaviour is not good, is not right, is unbecoming of you.' Constant drilling will surely have a tremendous effect.

Lack of *Sadhana* is the main cause of all sexual attractions. You must be sincere in your quest for spirituality. Half-heartedness will leave you in your old state of misery. The presence of woman or recollection of a woman usually excites unholy ideas in the mind of *Sadhu*s, thus depriving them of the fruits of their *Sadhana*. It is very difficult to understand the presence of subtle lust in the mind, though the look, tone, gesture, gait and behaviour may give a clue. A single unguarded moment is sufficient to capsize the whole casket of pearls down the abyss of lust. Mind is a very good impostor – *Bahurupi*. You must learn to control your good thoughts and feelings too. Or else, rotten ones will come hidden behind good ones. And once you surrender your alertness, the rotten thoughts will spring up in front of you and immediately kill you!

The sexual problem cannot be solved at the physical or verbal level. It is all in the mind. So sublimate it then. *Karma yoga* is meant for that.

Begin earnestly the practice of looking at one another a God himself.

That you are a man, a person, is the biggest fault. It is creating no end of confusions. First of all, the real nature of man is covered up by such a false assumption. Then starts a fantastic, bizarre, horrible creation of fantasies to which we give life.

You can be truthful in thought, word and deed only when you have left all desires.

Intense sadness or happiness connected with the world will cook up lust in us.

Selfishness is the only impurity. Selflessness is the only purity. We tend to think that being a little continent, we become pure. Nothing of the kind.

Even great sages like Vashishtha, with so much austerity, living only on roots and leaves, got mental disturbances on the sight of a woman's face. What to speak of us who have nothing such as austerity and whose food is ghee, dry fruits, milk, etc!

A comfortable religion eats into your moral fibre!

For monks, food is not the essential nutrition. It is *Veerya Shakti*. [*Veerya samrakshana*]. You must make a *sat-sankalpa*. Not a single drop of *Veerya* will be lost. For 12 years from the moment you make that *sankalpa*, lasts your *sadhana*. 12 years without a single deviation in thought.

Without perfect mental and physical health, one can never be a good *Brahmacharin.* One should be neither obese nor emaciated. Obese people are dull. *Kundalini* lies too dormant in such people. Emaciated people are nervously very weak. They generally have very intense sexual desires and are generally unable to control and redirect them along higher channels. Hence get into shape and be in good shape.

Be very clear about your decision that you want no sense pleasure. Else, that desire will remain in some dark corner of your mind, in hiding, biding its time. If you have not decided about this point, there is absolutely no value to all the attention that you give to

safeguarding your *Brahmacharya* vows. Search yourself mercilessly. 'It doesn't matter if that desire too stays a little' – if this happens to be your outlook, no amount of prayer will be of any avail!

Even in dreams, there should not arise in the mind any craving for the touch of a woman and the company of a lady. Your purity can be gauged by your experiences in your dreams. If one is entirely free from any sexual thought in dreams, he has reached the climax of purity. Lust cannot be eradicated except by the exceptional grace of God.

It is the *Kundalini* that acts as the 3 *guna*s – *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. A subtle but intimate connection exists between *Kundalini* and the mind. *Kundalini* makes the mind active or dull or serene. A *tamoguni* and *rajoguni* can never observe *Brahmacharya.* Only a pure *sattvaguni* can observe *Akhanda Brahmacharya*.

Techniques for practising *Brahmacharya*:

1. Every tip works only if ***you want*** to safeguard your *Brahmacharya*. St. Augustine once prayed, 'O Lord, grant me chastity; but not yet'!
2. Mind, *Prana* and *Veerya* are three links in one chain. Control any one of them, and the other two come under our control.
3. Talk and discuss only sublime topics. Listen to only sublime topics. Think and dream of only sublime ideas. This is most essential. As far as possible, be in good and holy company. Get far away from situations which could stimulate sexual reactions in you. At least take your eyes and ears off such places. A youth should look upon every female, irrespective of age, as his mother. One hour of bodily exercise every day is a must. The body should sweat every day. Be continually in a prayerful mood. Pray as soon as a bad thought passes your mind. Pray as soon as you see a bad sight. 'O Lord, make me a *tejasvi, ojasvi, urdhvaretasvi vyakti*'. It is most essential to be free from haughtiness and to have real inner humility. You can't be a true *Brahmacharin* otherwise. Regarding work allotted to you, by doing it efficiently, punctually, with concentration and dedication, by giving it a lot of thought and with a cheerful mind, tremendous mental strength grows. *Brahmacharya* is possible only with great mental strength.
4. If you wish to safeguard your *Veerya*, then practise rhythmic breathing throughout the day. And take cold water bath twice a day.
5. A *Brahmacharin* must control the sexual gazing impulse. This impulse is a great menace as it stimulates curiosity and sexual desire. The *Bhava* behind the look is what makes you or breaks you.
6. Impure thoughts that arise at the sight of a woman will gradually vanish when you grow in purity through *Sadhana*. Again and again, raise strong counter-thoughts of purity. Have the audacity to bring up these thoughts of purity exactly when the mind raises its bad memory stock! Bring up the Lord's image. Create disgust in your mind by analysis of the body parts.
7. When walking down the street, do not have a roving eye. Do not allow the eye to look here and there and everywhere. You cannot safeguard your *Veerya* if your eye steals even one look at a woman with impure feeling!
8. *Pranayama* will stabilise *Veerya*. Don't be like a piglet, running here and there. There should be tremendous quality of action.

9. Do not be familiar with anybody. Do not multiply friends. Do not court friendship with women. Do not also be very familiar with them. Familiarity with women will eventually end in your destruction. Never, never forget this point.
10. Do not mix with women. *Maya* works through undercurrents so stealthily that you may not be aware of your actual downfall. The *Kama Vasana* will assume an aggravated form all of a sudden without a moment's notice.
11. Do not test your spiritual strength and purity when you are a beginner. It will be a serious mistake.
12. *Japa, Japa, Japa.* Without constant *Japa,* you cannot have real *Brahmacharya*. Your *Veerya Shakti* will wreak havoc in you. Never leave a single moment unoccupied. Constant prayer and *Japa* are the only solution.
13. Do not even look at a woman. Never speak to one. It doesn't matter what others tell or feel. You will see what peace your mind will enjoy.
14. You are responsible for the expenditure of your *Veerya Shakti*. Keep praying continuously thus – 'Please keep me free from infatuation all my life.'
15. To control and sublimate lust, a Desert Father used to weave baskets in his leisure time.
16. A monk cuts off his nether tongue, but might let loose his upper tongue, i.e. he might eat voraciously. This could create uncontrollable problems for him.
17. Pure vibrations develop after 5-6 years of *Brahmacharya*. Surrender to God alone is the best means of saving yourself from falling. Sri Ramakrishna himself used hundreds of techniques to control lust.
18. To remind you of the Great Vow of *Brahmacharya,* you have to keep a knotted tuft. The hair removed stands for all desires renounced. Hair is also removed to dispel the sense of beauty from our face. Guru stays in *Sahasrara*.
19. Even when the *Kundalini* reaches the heart, lust could flare up and you could fall. Only when it *Ajna Chakra* are you safe. ***Sadhu Savadhan***! In the beginning, be afraid. Later, be cautious. Make special prayers to God for all its success. Only then is it possible.
20. Be always in a prayerful mood, before God in your heart. Remember Christ's words – 'Even if you entertain one unchaste thought, know that you have committed adultery.' If this is the case, how can you survive without a deep prayerful mood?
21. *Brahmacharya*! This is the greatest thing on Earth! Is there anything that even compares remotely to it? When you understand this, can you not pay an equitable price for it? Pray intensely, right before sleeping, to God, to help you protect your *Veerya*. Whatever thought you entertain before sleeping colours your entire personality. Pray intensely that you should wake up if by any chance *Veerya* should try to flow out. Pray very intensely.
22. Every morsel you eat, do so in *Brahmarpana Bhava*. 'This food is for you, my Lord, not for me.' It is to help this particular mental exercise that we maintain silence in our dining hall. This is a very important point. At 4 short intervals, every day, you have food. This means the tongue gets quickened every short while daily. This will constantly rob all energy from your *Vairagya*. Thus years of so-called *Sadhana* pass by and we won't have progressed.
23. Be ever alert. There is no telling at which moment in those 24 hours you become weak. Never allow mind to become soft or complacent. Let it always be very strict.

Absolutely no deviation from the ideal of *Akhanda Brahmacharya*. It is the nature of the mind to be hyper-strict towards other persons and over-considerate towards ourselves. This is a very subtle indication of the most dangerous form of weakness in aspirants. Beware!

24. Whenever an unnecessary thought arises, immediately stamp it out. Never entertain a thought that you cannot shout out in front of others. A warrior always has a sword to breakthrough and a shield to defend himself with.

25. Food can assist preponderance of *guna* in us. *Sheeta aahara* makes the mind dull and insipid. *Ushna aahara* will produce an irritation in the sex organs instigating the sex urge in the person. These constant sex irritations secret *Veerya*. The secreted *Veerya* passes out by tiny droplets resulting in loss of *Brahmacharya*. One will be subjected to storms of sexual desires and fantasies. The same is true of drink, bath and climate. For practicing *Akhanda Brahmacharya*, food, drink bath and climate should be neither too cold nor too hot. They should be moderate, pleasant.

26. Our spiritual practices must be done with such intensity that they hit hard in the *Muladhara*. But before such intense *Sadhana*, you must be extremely pure. Else, you will be like Rabindranath Tagore or Kuvempu or Mozart, oscillating between extremes of *Bhava* and sexuality; you will ruin yourself. A *rishi* must always be extremely careful about the lower *Chakra*s. Never should they be stimulated.

27. Once awakened, *Kundalini* keeps the mind ever active. Then one must engage in proper thought and work. Be very cautious of the society you keep. Free and intimate mixing, even with close friends, is very bad. Keep the tongue under restraint. Talk less. Eat and drink in a regulated manner. Exercise control on everything and everywhere. Stick to your routine very regularly and punctually. Irregularities will wreak havoc on your person. Just one bad sight, a single bad thought, company of just one bad person will certainly bring about a nasty fall very quickly. Because the senses and mind would have become extremely sharp and the reaction will be very quick and catastrophic. The fall would not have been so immediate before the awakening of the *Kundalini*, but now the story is different. Thus, to awaken the *Kundalini* and to keep it ever engaged along the right lines is a really adventurous and heroic task.

28. The lips are a sex spot, an erogenous zone. You will see many people playing around with their lips. This is a sign of sexual imbalance in them. *Brahmacharya* is a far cry for such people.

29. Intense *Tapas*, rigorous discipline, relentless prayer, coldwater bath, highly regulated food, sublime thoughts and conversation, never looking at the face of a woman or talking to them, *Japa, Dhyana* – without such intense effort, you cannot have *Brahmacharya*. A monk should not lose even a single drop of *Veerya*, even in his dreams! *Savadhan*!!

Some observations on *Brahmacharya*:

I shall tell you something most terrifying. Many commit fornication in their minds while putting on a show of piety and spirituality on the outside. A split personality. Good hypocrites. Nobody exerts force in order to purify their hearts. They do not seem to be boiling with the enthusiasm of achieving true spirituality. It is enough if they just show themselves to be spiritual in the eye of the superficial observers. How dangerous!

As Ashrama should be so designed that no woman will have to enter the Monks' Quarters, no woman will get to mix with *Brahmacharin*s and young monks at close quarters.

Innumerable are the instances where by repeated contact with women, we have lost so many *Brahmacharin*s and monks.

If the mind is pure and calm, the eye also is calm and steady. A *Brahmacharin* will have lustrous eyes, a sweet voice and a beautiful complexion.

A man who is established in mental *Brahmacharya* can never have even a single thought of evil in dreams. There is a lack of common sense and reason (*Viveka* & *Vichara*) in dreams. That is the reason why you get bad dreams though you maintain purity of mind in your waking state.

Lakshmana was an *Akhanda Brahmacharin*. Killing Indrajit required a man who had conserved his *Veerya Shakti* for 14 years without a break. Lakshmana came forward!

In a *yogi*'s body, there develops a mechanism by which *Veerya* is absorbed back into the body.

When your practise of *Brahmacharya* succeeds a little, ladies will feel attracted to you. Reject them once for all. Every now and then, convince your mind of the umpteen problems of a non-celibate life. Let the mind be aware of the facts. If you sleep over the facts, you kill yourself. If the mind knows the facts, it will slowly but certainly understand and do better.

After the entering of *Kundalini* into *Sushumna*, urine and faeces in a person become negligible and body becomes very flexible.

The body of a true *Brahmacharin* has the scent of a lotus. A man in whom gross *Veerya* is being produced can never give out this scent.

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On *Brahmacharya*: by Various Monks of the Ramakrishna Order

1. For an ordinary good life, some loss of *Veerya* is permissible and compatible. One can have a brilliant intellect and strong physique without being continent. *Akhanda Brahmacharya* is not mandatory for an average moral life. But, for God realization, it is a must. Carelessness and *Brahmacharya* are incompatible. Great precautions are necessary in spiritual life.
2. Why do we need to practice *Sadhana* and *Brahmacharya*? Without *Sadhana*, we cannot have perfect *Brahmacharya*. Without perfect *Brahmacharya*, God realization is impossible. Unless God is realised, real bliss cannot be had. Without real bliss, human life will be in vain.
3. Love of knowledge (philosophy) is a help in practicing *Brahmacharya*. A vibrant intellectual life is indispensable for *Brahmacharya*. For, it engages the mind in the higher planes.
4. Manhood is a great blessing. Man alone can become perfectly continent. We should be aware of our manhood. Real manliness lies in the power of observing *Brahmacharya*.
5. Swami Vivekananda's greatest contribution is his concept of divinity of man. Man attains manhood after he is perfectly continent. Till then, he is fighting his animal tendencies. Once *Akhanda Brahmacharya* is attained comes *Deva*-hood. So we understand our luminous nature after attaining *Brahmacharya*.
6. Sex is a terrible problem in the case of married people, but they somehow carry on with it. For a monk, sex should not be a problem, but still, it is to most of them. Analyse clearly why sex is a problem in monastic life.
7. Sexual maturity takes place in 3 distinct stages. Sex operates at 3 separate levels of our personality: physical, pranic and mental. Consequently, practise of *Brahmacharya* takes place in 3 distinct stages:
    i. *Veerya Dharana* (Retention): prevention of the conscious or unconscious loss of *Veerya*. This is followed by Stabilization of *Veerya* or Stabilization of the *Bindu*; not to allow the retained *Veerya* to be disturbed by sexual impulses even though there is no physical loss.
    ii. *Veerya Shodhana* (Purification): drying up of the *Veerya* and separating it from the body and mind like kernel from a dry coconut.
    iii. *Veerya Samskarana* (Sublimation): sublimation of *Retas* into *Ojas*.
8. *Retas* is the power hidden in *Veerya*. *Retas* will be lifted up through *Ida*, by practise of *Brahmacharya*. This is speeded up by deep thinking, studies, prayer and *Dhyana*. In the brain, *Retas* becomes *Ojas*. One should understand the value of seep thinking here. Without deep thinking, *Retas* will not rise up at all. This *Ojas* comes back through *Sushumna* to *Kundalini*.
9. It is only after 12-15 years of *Brahmacharya* that inferiority and insecurity will go. Then only the idea of immortality comes. All problems in the practice of *Brahmacharya* come only because of carelessness, tamas and ignorance.
10. Evil company makes you lose your will power. Never surrender your will when you are in a group.
11. *Veerya* means *Prana Shakti*. More food consumed than one can digest will mean loss of *Prana Shakti*. It is essential to know how much of food you should take to get maximum amount of *Prana Shakti*. *Prana Shakti* is needed to keep up clarity of thought.
12. The conquests of lust, of tongue and of monotony are the 3 great achievements of life.
13. Physical *Brahmacharya* might be attained. But the root, the stain, should be removed. The root of *Kama-Kanchana* can be removed by God alone. Carelessness and a bold-rash attitude,

both are to be avoided. Then alone physical *Brahmacharya* becomes possible. We generally forget our weaknesses and mingle with people carelessly. We should beware of soft emotions towards men and women.

14. Every sexual thought, desire and act, when checked and controlled, will be easily converted into *Ojas*, i.e. mental energy. This *Ojas* gives tremendous power to the man. He becomes a veritable god.
15. Until the development of *Medha Nadi*, the occasional wet dream cannot be altogether stopped. Once this *Nadi* develops, all the *Veerya* will get automatically converted into *Ojas*.
16. Immoral songs produce a very deep rotten impression in the mind. Run away from such places.
17. When lustful thoughts arise, do not wrestle with them; ignore them. Be vigilant and ignore them. Always have many weapons and many methods of warfare. Even cunning and deceit are allowed in warfare!
18. Develop the habit of looking beyond the skin and flesh! Woman is never as beautiful as you think and feel she is. Imagine that the skin has been stripped off the beautiful woman in front of you. Does she look enticing now? Imagine the whole skeleton from her teeth and you will have a horrible true picture of a woman as she looks behind her skin and flesh. Always remember that every young woman is only as beautiful as her old mother and old grandmother! Because, in just a few years, that is exactly how she is going to end up looking!
19. Woman is not an object of enjoyment. She is the mother of the race. Every woman is your woman. Salute every woman you meet, in your mind, with the mantra '*Sarva Mangala Maangalye...*' She is the embodiment of Mother Kali.
20. Meditate often on the benefits of *Akhanda Brahmacharya*; on the lives of *Akhanda Brahmacharin*s; on the *samskara*s of such lives.
21. Maya wreaks havoc through the faculty of imagination. Woman is not beautiful, but the imagination i.e. the mental concept of woman is very beautiful. Sugar is not sweet, but imagination of it is sweet. Food is not dainty, but its imagination is dainty. Man is not weak, imagination is weak. Beauty and ugliness are but imaginations of the mind. The real beauty if in Atman. Ashtavakra Gita says, '*Atmanam atisundaram*' (III.4). It is this Original Beauty that gets superimposed on various objects during various stages of our life – on toys, on girls, on homes, on clothes, on kids, etc. poets exaggerate the beauty of ladies. Go beyond the 'bewitching eyes' of damsels, behind the 'face like the moon', 'rosy cheeks and honeyed lips' and see what exactly exists. See things as you want to see them and you get bound hopelessly. See things as they really are and you get progressively free.
22. Always remember that the sexual organ is merely a urinary pipe for us monks.

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